

# YOU SHOULD READ THIS BEFORE BUILDING A DECK

## TIPS FOR BUILDING A TROPICAL HARDWOOD DECK

### 1. Ventilation is Very Important-

- Avoid using 1x6 if deck will be close to the ground. 5/4x6 or 1x4 will be less likely to cup. If ventilation is really poor, then special order 5/4x4 (most stable size).
- It is always a bad idea to run fascia or trim down close to the ground as this restricts airflow which promotes cupping and movement in the deck boards.
- When deck is very close to the ground be sure to leave adequate (if not exaggerated) edge gapping as moisture from beneath the deck will have to migrate through these gaps. Tight boards & poor ventilation = problems.
- Consider using lattice to fill the area between the deck and the ground as lattice allows for airflow.

### 2. Excessive Moisture or Standing Water Under the Deck Will Cause Problems-

- Address drainage issues prior to deck construction.
- Be sure gutters and downspouts don't empty under the deck
- If necessary, install a drain or gravel under the deck to prevent standing water.

### 3. Fasteners

- **Face screwing (or plug system like Starborn Pro Plug) is always preferred** but concealed fasteners can be used if installed properly on a well ventilated deck.
- Trim head screws are the best when face screwing. The Simpson DHPD Hardwood Screw is the ONLY screw we have found that will do through Ipe without pre-drilling. You will still want to pre-drill at the ends of boards to prevent splitting.
- Clips can be used but we suggest only on 5/4 x 6. If using clips on 1x (3/4") decking, then it is best to use biscuit cutter rather than run a continuous groove. Never use clips on a poorly ventilated deck as the extra movement caused by the poor ventilation will cause decking move off the clip. Everything must be near perfect for clips to perform properly. There is very little room for error when using clips.
- Camo system can be used but only if the deck will be well ventilated. Always use the 2 3/8" screws and be sure to pre-drill at ends of boards to prevent blow outs. If using Camo, then go with the 3/16" gapping over the 1/16" unless the deck is elevated with excellent ventilation.
- No boards are perfectly straight especially long boards. A Hardwood Wrench will really improve your installation experience. Applying Ipe Sealer or Anchorseal to any fresh field end cuts will minimize seasoning checks at the ends of the deck boards.

### 4. Finishing the Deck

- Ipe Oil, Messmers or Penofin Hardwood Oil will all work with Tropical Hardwood Decking.
- Do not apply in overly hot temperatures. Read application instructions on can.
- Wipe off excess as extra stain left standing on surface will take days to dry.
- Careful with soiled rags as stain soaked rags can catch fire. See can for cleanup and storage suggestions.
- If you decide to let your hardwood deck weather to a natural grey, you should consider applying an initial coat of oil to protect the decking during the final seasoning stages.

**Buy or Rent a Hardwood Wrench-you will be glad you did!**